
X. *Description of Mus Castorides, a new Species.* By the Rev.
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Read April 7th, 1812.

I HAVE taken the liberty to lay before the Linnean Society an account of a curious animal, which I believe has not been mentioned by any writer on Natural History, and may, therefore, be thought worthy of the Society's notice.

The order to which it belongs is plainly that of *Glires*, and it appears to form the connecting link between the genera *Castor* and *Mus*; it is placed, indeed, so nearly midway between them, that it may be difficult to determine which has the better claim. Its teeth are those of the beaver, for there are four molares on each side in either jaw, and the incisors are simply wedged; but it is deficient in the broad flat tail, which seems to constitute an essential generic character of the beaver, being so closely connected with the wonderful habits of life peculiar to that creature.

The occiput was broken, and a part of the muscles remained on the skull when I examined it; but as far as I could judge from this state, the conformation more nearly approaches that of the Norway rat, *M. Decumanus*, than that of the beaver; particularly in the smallness of the cranium, in the construction of the
anterior

anterior part of the zygomatic arch, and in the remarkable process of the lower jaw.

For these reasons I have referred it to the genus *Mus*; but some more skilful hand may hereafter designate it with greater propriety. Though nearly allied to both, it certainly differs generically from either the rat or beaver, and, in the hind feet, from, I think, all other Mammalia.

Such instances as this, the *Felis jubata*, and some recent acquisitions, show that there is much necessity for new intermediate genera in the Linnæan system: whenever these shall be arranged, the situation of the present subject will of course easily be found.

I have ventured to give the specific name "*Castorides*," and to call this the "*Beaver Rat*," rather than the *M. Coypus*, whose resemblance to both is not so great.

The following description is, to the best of my knowledge, tolerably correct.

MUS CASTORIDES.
Mus, caudâ mediocri terete squamatâ subpilosâ, plantis palmatis.

Longitudo corporis 21 pollicum, caudæ $8\frac{1}{2}$.

Color cinereo-fuscus, subtus flavescens; pili breviores crassi, molles, cinerei, longiores fusci flavo annulati: auriculæ rotundatæ, nudæ: oculi parvi: mystaces longissimi, rigidi: dentes primores superiores 1 pollicem æquant, inferiores $1\frac{1}{4}$: pedes pentadactyli, planta palmata digitis externis penè separatis.

In addition to the above characters it may be remarked, that the nose is surrounded with whitish hair, that there are a few stiff bristles at the base of each claw, that the thumb is extremely short and the claw thick, that the length of the middle claw of the fore foot is one inch, and that of the metatarsus three inches.

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The person who first possessed the animal in this country states that he bought it on board a ship from the Brazils: I had afterwards frequent opportunities of observing it, and of making my drawing while it was alive at Exeter 'Change. It died suddenly, and without any apparent cause; and is now in the collection of Mr. Bullock.

When teased or disturbed it uttered a weak cry, but was good-tempered, and not easily roused to resistance.

The method of feeding was the same with that of most of the Glires, but the forepart of the body was very little raised.